

## Message Text

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ORIGIN NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 PM-03 L-01 EB-04 TRSE-00 OMB-01 AID-05

IGA-01 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 RSC-01 MC-01 DODE-00 /050 R

DRAFTED BY NEA/AFN:DLMACK:CFE

APPROVED BY NEA:HNSAUNDERS

PM/SAS:RSMITH (DRAFT)

L/PM:TBOREK (DRAFT)

EB/OIA:WWITTING (DRAFT)

NEA/AFN:MWWILEY

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P 260007Z OCT 74

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY TUNIS PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 236118

STADIS////////////////////////////////////

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS:MASS,EFIN, TS, US

SUBJECT: TUNISIAN INTEREST ARREARAGES

REF: TUNIS 6489

FOR AMBASSADOR FROM DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY SAUNDERS

1. ROY ATHERTON LEFT WASHINGTON FOR AN EXTENDED PERIOD  
ON THE DAY YOUR CABLE ARRIVED, SO I AM REPLYING IN  
HIS ABSENCE.

2. WE, OF COURSE, SHARE YOUR INTEREST IN NOT  
INTRODUCING AN IRRITANT INTO U.S.-TUNISIAN MILITARY  
RELATIONSHIP. PROBLEM WE ARE FACED WITH UNFORTUNATELY,  
IS LEGISLATIVE LINKAGE BETWEEN DEBT AND CONTINUATION  
OF MAP PROGRAM. REQUEST BY GOT FOR A WAIVER OF  
INTEREST CHARGES HAS BEEN GIVEN CAREFUL CONSIDERATION  
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HERE BUT CONSENSUS HAS BEEN THAT SITUATION DOES NOT

PROVIDE JUSTIFICATION FOR CONTINUING MAP PROGRAM WITHOUT REGARD TO DEBT. TUNISIANS CLEARLY OWE THE DEBT AND RELATIVELY SMALL AMOUNT INVOLVED IS WITHIN GOT CAPABILITY TO PAY.

3. COMING AT THIS FOR THE FIRST TIME, I LOOK AT THIS AS ONE OF THOSE REGRETTABLE CASES WHERE SOME SLOPPINESS OF BOOKKEEPING ON BOTH WASHINGTON AND GOT SIDES HAS NOW CREATED EMBARRASSING SITUATION. AS I UNDERSTAND IT, SUGGESTION WAS MADE FROM HERE NEARLY A YEAR AGO THAT DEPARTMENT WOULD PROBABLY FIND IT NECESSARY TO TURN DOWN THE WAIVER REQUEST. I GATHER WE WAITED UNTIL AUGUST 1974 TO REQUEST YOU FORMALLY TO COLLECT THE DEBT FOR TWO REASONS: 1) EFFORTS TO MAKE ABSOLUTELY SURE THAT THE GOT WAS LEGALLY OBLIGED TO PAY THE DEBT AND TO BE CERTAIN OF THE PRECISE AMOUNT DUE; AND 2) A MARKED INCREASE IN RECENT MONTHS OF THE SCRUTINY BY DOD OF THE CONDITIONS FOR ELIGIBILITY OF MAP RECIPIENTS. IT IS THE LATTER WHICH REALLY BRINGS THE SUBJECT UP AT THIS TIME.

4. NOW WE HAVE THE PROBLEM OF GETTING THIS CLEARED UP PROMPTLY AND OUT OF THE WAY. OBVIOUSLY, WE DO NOT WANT TO ADVISE THE GOT BLUNTLY THAT UNLESS THEY PAY THE DEBT IMMEDIATELY THEY WOULD BECOME INELIGIBLE FOR MAP. THE DEPARTMENT, HOWEVER, WANTS TO BE SURE THAT YOU ARE AWARE THAT, GIVEN MOUNTING PRESSURES HERE, CONTINUATION OF MAP PROGRAM IS IN JEOPARDY BECAUSE OF THE UNPAID DEBT. IT IS ALSO TRUE THAT AN FMS DEBT ARREARAGE COULD SPILL OVER INTO OTHER AREAS, SUCH AS USG CONSIDERATION OF THE GOT'S ELIGIBILITY FOR MILITARY AND ECONOMIC CREDITS. PROMPT PAYMENT OF THIS RELATIVELY SMALL SUM WOULD LAY THE ISSUE TO REST. ABSENT THAT, A CLEAR INDICATION BY THE GOT THAT PAYMENT WILL BE FORTHCOMING AS SOON AS POSSIBLE WOULD STRENGTHEN THE DEPARTMENT'S ABILITY TO WORK OUT WHATEVER ACCOMMODATION IS NECESSARY TO KEEP MAP PROGRAMS GOING. WE CANNOT, HOWEVER, MAKE ANY PROMISES IN THE LATTER REGARD SINCE IT CONFIDENTIAL

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REQUIRED A CONSIDERABLE EFFORT TO OBTAIN DOD AGREEMENT TO FUND MAP TRAINING DURING THE MONTH OF OCTOBER. WE HOPE THAT THIS MATTER CAN NOW BE DISPOSED OF BEFORE IT HAS A SERIOUS ADVERSE IMPACT ON THE FUTURE OF THE MAP PROGRAM.

5. THUS, IT IS MY HOPE THAT YOU WILL FIND SOME TACTFUL WAY TO RAISE THIS ISSUE WITH TUNISIANS.

YOU ARE, OF COURSE, THE BEST JUDGE OF THE MANNER AND  
LEVEL FOR REQUESTING PAYMENT OF THIS SUM.  
OBVIOUSLY, WE ALL HOPE IT CAN BE DONE BEFORE THE  
DEBT QUESTION DAMAGES ONGOING TRAINING PROGRAMS AND  
SUCH NEW INITIATIVES AS THE JP-4 FUEL DELIVERY WHICH  
YOU HAVE MENTIONED. INGERSOLL

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